



## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### DECISION MAKING / PROBLEM SOLVING

- Give me an example of a time when you had to keep from speaking or making a decision because you did not have enough information.
- What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?
- Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- What was your most difficult decision in the last 6 months? What made it difficult?
- What kind of decisions do you make rapidly? What kind takes more time? Give examples.
- Tell me about a specific time when you had to handle a tough problem which challenged fairness or ethical issues.
- Give me an example of a time you had to make a difficult decision.
- Give me an example of a time when there was a decision to be made and procedures were not in place. What was the outcome?
- Describe a specific problem you solved for your employer. How did you approach the problem? What role did others play? What was the outcome?
- Give me an example of when taking your time to make a decision paid off.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Please describe a time when you faced a significant organizational or political barrier to succeeding with an important work project or activity. Describe the barrier and the process you used to arrive at your solution.

### LEADERSHIP

- Have you ever had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach? Did it work?
- Give an example of your ability to build motivation in your co-workers, classmates, and even if on a volunteer committee.
- What is the most critical feedback you have ever received?
- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from? Describe how you handled it. What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a project that you initiated. How did you communicate the project?
- What are 3 effective leadership qualities you think are important? How have you demonstrated these qualities in your past/current position?
- Have you ever been a member of a group where two of the members did not work well together? What did you do to get them to do so?
- What risks did you take in your present/previous job? Please describe in detail.
- Describe what steps/methods you have used to define/identify a vision for your unit/position.

- Tell me about a leader you have worked with who you greatly respect. What are the characteristics of this person that make them effective and motivational as the leader of a team?
- In your previous positions, what were your short and long-term goals? Who else was involved in setting them? Which goals were achieved?
- Describe a leadership situation that you would handle differently if you had it to do over again.
- Tell me about a time when you reached out for additional responsibility.
- Tell me about a time when you influenced the outcome of a project by taking a leadership role.
- Give me an example of when you involved others in making a decision.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to provide a co-worker with recognition for the work they performed. What did they do?
- Tell me about a time when you anticipated the future and made changes to current responsibilities/operations to meet future needs.
- Recall a time when you had to gain the commitment of a team for a new program or initiative. First, describe the nature of the program or initiative. Then, describe the steps you took to communicate the value of the effort to the team and gain its commitment.

## CAREER MOTIVATION

- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Give me an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date.
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the action of others.
- Tell me about an important goal that you set in the past. Were you successful? Why?
- How would you define “success” for someone in your chosen career?
- Give examples of your experiences in a job that were satisfying. Give examples of your experiences that were dissatisfying.
- What kind of supervisor do you work best for? Provide examples.
- Which accomplishment on the job gave you more satisfaction than any other?
- Describe why you are motivated to pursue and succeed in this role you are applying for? What are you truly passionate about?

## TEAMWORK

- Gaining the cooperation of others can be difficult. Give a specific example of when you had to do that and what challenges you faced. What was the outcome? What was the long-term impact on your ability to work with this person?
- Describe the types of teams you’ve been involved with. What were your roles?
- Describe a team experience you found rewarding.
- Describe a team experience you found disappointing. What would you have done to prevent this?
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Tell me about a course, work experience, or extracurricular activity where you had to work closely with others. How did it go? How did you overcome any difficulties?
- Please give me your best example of working cooperatively as a team member to accomplish an important goal or objective. What was the goal or objective? What was your role in achieving this objective? To what extent did you interact with others on this project?

- Describe a situation in which you found that your results were not up to your supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
- Describe a problem you had in your life when someone else's help was very important to you.
- Tell me about a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing their share of the work. Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?
- Tell me about a time when your coworkers gave you feedback about your actions. How did you respond? What changes did you make?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.
- Describe a project you were responsible for that required a lot of interaction with people over a long period of time.
- Recall an experience in which you worked on a team that included a diverse membership, either in expertise, background, experience, etc. For you, what challenges and opportunities did this diversity create?
- How have you recognized and rewarded a team player in the past? What was the situation?

## INITIATIVE

- Give me examples of projects/tasks you started on your own.
- Tell me about a time when you took it upon yourself to accomplish a task on the job, without being asked.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Describe the most creative work-related project you have completed.
- Give some instances in which you anticipated problems and were able to influence a new direction.
- What did you do to prepare for this interview?
- Give me an example of a situation that could not have happened successfully without you being there.
- Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.

## COMMUNICATION

- Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?
- Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation which you had to complete.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person, even when that individual may not have personally liked you.
- Give me a specific example of a time when a co-worker criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that event shaped the way you communicate with others?
- Tell me about a time when you had to present complex information.
- Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a difference of opinion with a co-worker/customer/supervisor. How do you feel you showed respect?
- Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get across an important point.

- Describe the way you handled a specific problem involving others with differing values, ideas and beliefs in your current or previous position.
- Tell me about a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you. Can you also describe a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed?
- What has been your experience in giving presentations to small or large groups? What has been your most successful experience in speech making?

## PROCESS IMPROVEMENT / CHANGE CATALYST

- Give me an example when you initiated a change in process or operations.
- Describe something you have implemented at work. What were the steps you used to implement this?
- Tell me about a suggestion you made to improve the way job processes/operations worked? What was the result?
- Please provide an example when you initiated a change in process or operations in response to customer feedback. How did you implement the process? How did it satisfy the customer's need?
- In your previous position, what problems did you identify that had previously been overlooked? Were any changes made? Who supported the changes as a result of your ideas?
- Describe a new idea you developed in the past to reshape an existing work process or system. How did you come up with the idea? How did you test your idea and work to have it implemented?
- Please describe a time when you had to ignite a change effort in your organization. What situation did you face and how did you motivate others to follow your lead?
- How do you deal with teammates that are resistant to change?
- Imagine that you were leading an under-performing team that was reluctant to take necessary risks to be more successful. What steps would you take to "jump start" the performance of this team?

## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Tell me about the most difficult challenge you faced in trying to work cooperatively with someone who did not share the same ideas. What was your role in achieving the work objective? What was the long-term impact on your ability to get things done while working with this person?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to address an angry customer. What was the problem and what was the eventual outcome? What was your role in defusing the situation?
- Describe a recent unpopular decision you made and what the result was.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively "read" another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their needs and values.
- Tell me about the most difficult or frustrating individual that you've ever had to work with, and how you managed to work with them.

## ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGE / FLEXIBILITY

- Describe a time where you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- By providing examples, demonstrate that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and/or environments.

- What do you do when your priorities change quickly? Give me an example of when this happened.
- Please tell me about a decision you made while under a lot of pressure.
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist them? What was the result?
- Tell me about a specific time when you were given new information that affected a decision that you had already made. What was the outcome?
- Describe how you develop a project team's goals and project plan?
- What do you do when your time schedule or project plan is upset by unforeseen circumstances? Give an example.

## TIME MANAGEMENT

- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What things did you fail to do? What were the repercussions? What did you learn?
- Tell me about a time when you were particularly effective on prioritizing tasks and completing a project on schedule.
- Are you better at working on many things at a time, or are you better at working on and getting results on a few specific things? Please provide two examples that illustrate this.
- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
- What have you done in order to be effective with your organization and planning?
- How do you schedule your time? Set priorities? How do you handle multiple tasks at once?
- Describe a situation when you had many projects due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give me an example.

## DEVELOPING SELF AND OTHERS

- Tell me about a time when you were responsible for helping another person with their professional development. How did you begin?
- Suppose you are working with someone who has less experience than you and needs to develop a competency or skill in order to be more effective. Your boss has asked you to help this person "get up to speed." What would you do to help that person develop? What types of activities, resources, or tools would you recommend to help the person develop most effectively?
- How do you stay aware of trends, changes and opportunities within your professional field? How does this awareness influence your day to day work?
- In what ways are managers responsible for the development of their people? What responsibilities do individuals have for managing their own development?
- Imagine that an employee who reports to you has not been performing well. How would you use the typical elements of a performance review process to address the problem?
- Recall a time when you had to confront a staff member about their poor performance. How did you make the conversation as constructive as possible?
- Describe a decision you made or situation that you would have handled differently if you had to do it over again.
- What have you done to further your own professional development in the last 5 years?
- Describe to me a recent job or experience that you would describe as a real learning experience. What did you learn?
- Recall a time when you wanted to control and run a project yourself, but decided to empower someone else to run the project, even though there was a high risk that they would make some mistakes. What did you do to help your delegate succeed on their own?

- ♦ Tell me about a time when you were asked to complete a difficult assignment even though the odds were against you. What did you learn from this experience?
- ♦ Tell me about a time when your supervisor/co-workers gave you feedback about your work/actions. What did you learn about yourself?
- ♦ Discuss the highlights of your most recent educational experience. Did you accomplish any special achievements? What were your most difficult challenges?

## SUPERVISION

- ♦ Give me an example of a time when you helped a staff member accept change and make the necessary adjustments to move forward. What were the change/transition skills you used?
- ♦ What do you see as the difference between “empowerment” and “delegation”? What are the keys to effective empowerment? What skills does a manager need to use most when empowering his or her staff? How important is delegation of responsibility in empowering others?
- ♦ Imagine that you have a direct report that wants additional responsibility, but you feel that they do not have the skills to handle it. What would you do? How might you help your direct report develop the necessary skills? Do you think that partially delegating responsibility is a good idea or even possible?
- ♦ Tell me about a time when you had to take disciplinary action with someone you supervised.
- ♦ Tell me about a time when you had to tell a staff member that you were dissatisfied with his or her work.
- ♦ What one experience proved to you that you would be a capable manager?
- ♦ Tell me about a time when you had to handle a tough morale problem.
- ♦ Discuss a work situation in which you felt you successfully directed the work of others.
- ♦ Tell me about a time when your department was going through long-term changes or working on a long-term project. What did you do to keep your staff focused?
- ♦ Give me a specific example of how you have empowered your staff to make independent decisions.
- ♦ Tell me about the expectations you create for staff.

# INTERVIEW EVALUATION

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating Scale: 1– Weak / 3 – Very Strong

COMPETENCY	RATING	COMMENTS

Recommend for Hire? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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